

Top Ten SAT Test Tips

Test Tips to Boost your SAT Score

By [Kelly Roell](#), About.com Guide

1. **Use Process of Elimination (POE).** Get rid of as many wrong choices as you can on the SAT before answering a question. Wrong answers are often easier to find. Look for extremes like "never" "only" "always" in Critical Reading; Look for opposites in the Math section like a substitution of -1 for 1 . Look for words that sound similar in the Writing section like "conjunctive" and "subjunctive."
2. **Answer every question *only* if you can eliminate answer choices.** Unlike taking the [ACT](#), you are penalized $\frac{1}{4}$ point when you get an answer wrong on the SAT test. So the smartest thing to do is to only answer a question if you can use a process of elimination and get rid of two or three answer choices.
3. **Leave any question blank where you can't identify at least one wrong choice, except for the math grid-ins.** There will be questions (not too many) on the test that you'll have no idea how to answer. None of the answer choices will seem familiar; you may not have ever even heard the words listed below. If you can't eliminate even one wrong choice from the answers, leave the question blank, except for the math grid-ins, where there is no penalty for guessing. On every other section, you'll get zero points for a blank question, which is better than a quarter point reduction for guessing incorrectly.
4. **Write in the test booklet.** Use your pencil to physically scratch out wrong choices, write down formulas and equations, solve math problems, outline, paraphrase and underline to help you read. No one is going to read what you wrote in the test booklet, so use it to your advantage.
5. **Transfer your questions at the end of each section.** Instead of going back and forth between the scantron and the test booklet, just write your answers in the test booklet and transfer them over at the end of every section/page. You'll make fewer mistakes and save time.
6. **Slow down.** It's very hard to finish all the problems and maintain accuracy. Slow down a little bit, answer fewer questions correctly instead of guessing at the entire lot. (Remember, a blank answer = 0 points, whereas a wrong answer = $-\frac{1}{4}$ point). You'll get a better score if you answer 75% of the questions on the test and answer them correctly, than if you answer all of them and get 50% correct.
7. **Choose which questions to answer first.** In every section except for the Critical Reading section, the questions are arranged from easy to difficult. However, that doesn't mean that the easy questions are going to be the easiest for you. After prepping for the test with practice questions, choose your own order of difficulty and answer the easiest questions *for you* first. Just be sure to keep track of the numbers, so you mark the answers correctly on the scantron.
8. **Remember the order of difficulty.** Because each section is arranged from easiest to most difficult, the obvious answers toward the beginning of a section may actually be correct. If you're in the final third of a section, though, beware of the obvious answer choices – they're probably distracters.
9. **Cross-check your ovals.** If you have time at the end of a section, cross-check your answers with your scantron ovals. Make sure you didn't miss a question!
10. **Don't second-guess yourself.** Statistics prove that your first answer choice is usually correct. Do not go back through the test and change your answers. Your first instinct is typically correct.

http://testprep.about.com/od/tipsfortesting/a/SAT_TestTips.htm

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